

6 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conference on Covert Action Training

1. The meeting to discuss covert action training, particularly the covert action operations course, called by DC/CA for 1500 hours, 6 February 1967, was attended by the following: DC/CA, who chaired the meeting; Messrs.

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EUR was not represented.

2. Summary of conclusions: From a wealth of different viewpoints and lengthy discussions, the following themes emerged from the meeting:

a. Crucial to the success of CA operations is developing a basic attitude toward CA in the context of integrated operations. A joint FI/CI/CA approach should be taught, possibly at a middle or senior level seminar after suitable coordination and clearance at the DDP level.

b. While the training for CT's should be improved, the middle level officer should be given intensive

seminar-type exposure to special areas of skills available and to major areas of techniques needed in CA operations. A seminar outline for this purpose is to be developed.

c. An inventory or catalogue of Headquarters and field personnel and information in a number of specialized fields required in CA operations should be developed and drawn on in the seminar cited above.

3. DC/CA opened the meeting by commenting that the cancellation of the CA operations course indicated that it was not fulfilling current needs; the purpose of the present meeting is to discuss these needs. [REDACTED] of OTR noted the cancellation of the last two scheduled CAO courses and referred to the outline of the past course and present revision. The purpose of the course is to provide middle-level (not junior) officers a problem solving approach to covert action operations, even though these people may have had only limited or even no previous CA experience. The discussion developed a number of problems regarding this course which had reduced interest in it. For a Division like AF with small stations it is difficult to fit such a long course into the pre-departure schedule of the COS or DCOS. A shorter course or a required course is given priority. This was amplified by the experience in NE Division which has problems in making people available for courses in an increasingly tight personnel situation. A returnee from

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the field or participant in the mid-career course cannot be spared for more training. It is difficult to spare even CT's who have just come from the CT course. A short course with specific skills might be valuable, but in choosing between CI and CA in defining areas in which to add needed skills, the former would be given priority. From an FE Division point of view, it was felt that the course may try to tackle too many problems at one time and thus becomes too long even for case officers who are able to specialize in CA but who would prefer to spend a concentrated time with a CA Staff branch in discussions. This process of searching out individual officers to consult, it was noted, left a great deal to chance.

STATINTL 4. [REDACTED] outlined the nature of CA training in the CT program as consisting of familiarization in the OFC and a problem in the OC which is to be revised to sharpen the CA concepts along with lectures and presentations from CA Staff and Division representatives and a panel. There followed a lengthy discussion with many exchanges of views on the weaknesses in the current training concepts. The courses as now taught, it was noted, are one-sided and tend to give an FI/CI slant which shapes the attitudes of the CT in the direction of compartmentation instead of promoting the concept of integrated operations which is necessary for higher-level but also for junior officers. Though the needs vary at different levels, the concept must stress integrated

operations requiring imagination in situations which test the participant's ability to deal with situations on the job. Individual country presentations do not help much in this process. Courses on a single phase of operations, as the CAO, attract only those officers who can be spared at the moment. It was noted that since we cannot afford the luxury of specialization of CA, we need a course for integrated operations for grades 11 through 13. It was also noted that CT's are not being given training on how to use the information available to a policy-maker or political action operator, so that when they become senior officers, they find that they would profit from training in this facet of operations. Another aspect of this is the ability to be our own consumer of information for even short-term operational purposes. The OTR operations school is examining the problem of the dichotomy between the lengthy book training given to CT's and the experience collected by officers in grades 11 through 15 without book training. Even a senior operations course or seminar, which would be useful, may not solve all the CA training needs.

5. This discussion raised the question of whether training should be in a "game" or a seminar. There was no sentiment for straight lectures. The game approach was criticized as being too strongly oriented toward management and required too much briefing in on the given situation in preparation. Arguments against both these will be given.

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presented, but after terms were explained it seemed that the discussion favored a seminar over a game.

6. The problem of specialization versus general approach was raised in several comments. CA operations often suffer from being too ad hoc or routine in nature instead of developing longer-term strategies and improved tactics. There needs to be more attention to developing major techniques, such as recruiting agents of influence. In arguing against over-specialization, it was noted that it is necessary to know only where the specialists can be located for use on specific tasks. It was also noted, however, that the Station must know when to call on specialists and how to run operations after the specialists leave. Training which puts a man through the paces in a number of fields imparts these techniques in several areas. This is necessary because an individual cannot know precisely ahead of time what specialities will be used. It was noted that teaching of techniques in a doctrinal approach may bring collected experience to bear on given areas better than individual case studies. During this discussion the following points were brought out: the importance of the aptitude of the individual for CA, political ability or "machsi" necessary for FI/CA operations (though admittedly not always for a COS), attitudes toward problems which have CA as well as FI aspects, and the need to stress that a CA approach or CA operations should not be equated with the technical ability

to manage institutions or organizations.

7. The discussion returned to the nature of an integrated course or seminar and reached the tentative conclusion that there should be an integrated approach to operations to be offered at the middle level for all the DDP. If this is not done DDP-wide, individual divisions will attempt to do it for their own needs. The solution is not found in the mid-career course, which involves participants and subject matter outside the DDP. The middle-level seminar or course offerings are lacking or weak in all fields (FI does not even offer a course), and the means of correcting the problem may be in a joint approach by CA, CI and FI staffs to the DDP level to propose integrated instruction or a seminar.

8. The ability to locate specialists or specialized skills arose again in the context of locating or maintaining an assets inventory. It was felt that such an inventory of people, projects, or skills is needed and that officers needed to be exposed to major problem areas, such as the manipulation of major organizations or production of publications, or production of specific types of propaganda such as black operations. It was also felt desirable to hold seminars or discussions on specific kinds of situations, such as election operations and specialized techniques. Since much of this information is already available in the branches of CA Staff, it may be desirable to give an outline of where these assets or this information is located, as in the form

of a briefing on catalogues of capabilities in CA Staff or elsewhere for returnees from the field and others.

9. Related to the last points, but distinct from the need for generalized integrated operations, the discussion closed by returning to a summarized need for improved CT training, some means of familiarizing officers with operations, and maintaining specialized courses in specific fields. The discussion brought out the point that what is lacking in CT and other training is emphasis on "nuts and bolts" operational techniques at the mid-career or middle-grade level. It was also felt useful to distinguish between the officers being assigned to the desks and those going to the field. This discussion brought out that even improving the CT program would not cover the 60% of the DDP officers who are not products of the CT program. It was stressed that the course to be offered must be short, crammed full of information, attractive to Divisions and participants and have the strong backing of the Divisions. It was recognized that the course cannot "teach people to think", but the possibility that the course would not be filled to capacity met with comments that Divisions would ensure participation in a good course. It was recommended that

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[REDACTED] be confined to three days, include the instructors or outside guests for the entire time, and including evening

bull-sessions. It was suggested that the first day of the seminar be devoted to a presentation of existing capabilities and means of locating them in Headquarters and elsewhere and that the last two days deal with interesting areas of operations. These latter might be on a country basis or on functional subjects. Advance prior reading should be assigned. To assist in the planning of the course, OTR must be informed of who is coming long enough in advance and definitely enough to plan accordingly. [REDACTED] accepted the request from DC/CA to outline the seminar program and consult with CA Staff on his outline.

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STATINTL 9. The next [REDACTED] operations course was announced.

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